In the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A computerized method for execution by a client, the method comprising:

transmitting a request to download data, wherein said data comprises a content file;

receiving identification information and data downloaded from one of a plurality of content providers storing said data, said identification information identifying said one content provider and obtained by said one content provider from an original content provider of said data, wherein a server maintains a list of the plurality of content providers storing said data;

transmitting, to said original content provider, said identification information for said one content provider, which downloaded said data, along with payment for the download of said data;

transmitting, to said original content provider, a request for a distribution tool identifying said client as an additional content provider that distributes said data to other clients;

receiving said distribution tool; and

applying said distribution tool to said data to identify said client as an additional content provider prior to distributing said data to another client, wherein said clients are operated by users of the content file, and, in response to said applying, the list of the plurality of content providers of said data is updated to include the client as the additional content provider for said data.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said data is encrypted and contains a plurality of encrypted content files.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein applying said distribution tool comprises embedding said distribution tool within said data.

5-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said distribution tool comprises a digital watermark.

8. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein transmitting said identification information further comprises:

transmitting said payment for download of a decryption tool for decrypting said data; and

receiving said decryption tool.

9. (Currently amended) A computerized method for execution by an original content provider, the method comprising:

receiving, from a client, identification information for one of a plurality of content providers, which downloaded of data to said client, along with payment for the download of said data, wherein said data comprises a content file and a server maintains a list of the plurality of content providers for said data;

receiving, from said client, a request for a distribution tool identifying said client as an additional content provider that distributes said data to other clients; ~~and~~

transmitting said distribution tool to said client for subsequent application of the distribution tool to said data by said client to identify said client as an additional content provider prior to distributing said data to another client by said client, wherein said clients are operated by users of the content file; and

in response to the client applying the distribution tool, updating the list of the plurality of content providers of said data to include the client as the additional content provider for said data.

10. (Original) The method according to claim 9, wherein said data is encrypted and contains a plurality of encrypted content files.

11. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein said application of said distribution tool by said client comprises embedding said distribution tool within said data.

12-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 9, further comprising storing said distribution tool identifying said client.

15. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 9, wherein said distribution tool comprises a digital watermark.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 10, wherein receiving said identification information further comprises:

receiving said payment for download of a decryption tool for decrypting said data; and

transmitting said decryption tool to said client.

17. (Original) The method according to claim 9, further comprising transmitting a fee to said one content provider.

18. (Original) The method according to claim 17, wherein said fee is predetermined and represents a percentage of said payment received for the download of said data.

19. (Currently amended) A system comprising:

a client configured to transmit a request to download data, wherein said data comprises a content file; and

a server for an original content provider coupled to said client and configured to receive identification information for one of a plurality of content providers, which downloaded said data to said client, along with payment for the download of said data, to maintain a list of the plurality of content providers of said data, to receive a request for a

distribution tool identifying said client as an additional content provider that distributes said data to other clients, ~~and~~ to transmit said distribution tool to said client, wherein said client is further configured to receive and apply said distribution tool to said content to identify said client as an additional content provider prior to distributing said data to another client by said client, wherein said clients are operated by users of the content file, and, in response to said client applying said distribution tool, to update the list of the plurality of content providers of said data to include the client as the additional content provider for said data.

20. (Original) The system according to claim 19, wherein said data is encrypted and contains a plurality of encrypted content files.

21. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 19, wherein applying said distribution tool comprises embedding said distribution tool within said data.

22-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 19, wherein said server stores said distribution tool identifying said client.

25. (Previously presented) The system according to claim 19, wherein said distribution tool comprises a digital watermark.

26. (Original) The system according to claim 20, wherein said server further receives said payment for download of a decryption tool for decrypting said data from said client, and transmits said decryption tool to said client.

27. (Original) The system according to claim 19, wherein said server further transmits a fee to said one content provider.

28. (Original) The system according to claim 27, wherein said fee is predetermined and represents a percentage of said payment received for the download of said data.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently amended) A computer readable medium containing executable instructions, which, when executed in a processing system for a client, cause said system to perform a method comprising:

transmitting a request to download data, wherein said data comprises a content file;

receiving identification information and data from one of a plurality of content providers storing said data, said identification information identifying said one content provider and obtained by said one content provider from an original content provider of said data, wherein a server maintains a list of the plurality of content providers storing said data;

transmitting, to said original content provider, said identification information for said one content provider, which downloaded said data, along with payment for the download of said data;

transmitting to said original content provider, a request for a distribution tool identifying said client as an additional content provider that distributes said data to other clients;

receiving said distribution tool; and

applying said distribution tool to said data to identify said client as an additional content provider prior to distributing said data to another client, wherein said clients are operated by users of the content file, and, in response to said applying, the list of the plurality of content providers of said data is updated to include the client as the additional content provider for said data.

31. (Original) The computer readable medium according to claim 30, wherein said data is encrypted and contains a plurality of encrypted content files.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium according to claim 30, wherein applying said distribution tool comprises embedding said distribution tool within said data.

34-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium according to claim 30, wherein said distribution tool comprises a digital watermark.

37. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium according to claim 31, wherein transmitting said identification information further comprises:

     transmitting said payment for download of a decryption tool for decrypting said data; and

     receiving said decryption tool.

38. (Currently amended) A computer readable medium containing executable instructions, which, when executed in a processing system for an original content provider, cause said system to perform a method comprising:

     receiving, from a client, identification information for one of a plurality of content providers, which downloaded of data to said client, along with payment for the download of said data, wherein said data comprises a content file and a server maintains a list of the plurality of content providers of said data;

     receiving, from said client, a request for a distribution tool identifying said client as an additional content provider that distributes said data to other clients; and

     transmitting said distribution tool to said client for subsequent application to said data by said client to identify said client as an additional content provider prior to distributing said data to another client by said client, wherein said clients are operated by users of the content file; and

in response to the client applying the distribution tool, updating the list of the plurality of content providers of said data to include the client as the additional content provider for said data.

39. (Original) The computer readable medium according to claim 38, wherein said data is encrypted and contains a plurality of encrypted content files.

40. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium according to claim 38, wherein application of said distribution tool by said client comprises embedding said distribution tool within said data.

41-42. (Cancelled)

43. (Previously presented) The computer readable medium according to claim 38, wherein the method further comprises storing said distribution tool identifying said client.

44. (Previously presented d) The computer readable medium according to claim 38, wherein said distribution tool comprises a digital watermark.

45. (Original) The computer readable medium according to claim 39, wherein receiving said identification information further comprises:

receiving said payment for download of a decryption tool for decrypting said data; and

transmitting said decryption tool to said client.

46. (Original) The computer readable medium according to claim 38, wherein the method further comprises transmitting a fee to said one content provider.

47. (Original) The computer readable medium according to claim 46, wherein said fee is predetermined and represents a percentage of said payment received for the download of said data.

48. (Currently amended) A computerized method for execution by a client, the method comprising:

transmitting a request to receive data, wherein said data comprises a content file;

receiving said data from a first content provider for said data, said first content provider being one of a plurality of content providers making data available to said client, wherein a server maintains a list of the plurality of content providers of said data;

receiving identification information that identifies said first content provider, said identification information obtained by said first content provider from an original content provider of the data;

transmitting said identification information and payment for said data to said original content provider;

transmitting a request for a distribution tool to said original content provider, wherein said request for a distribution tool identifies said client as an additional content provider that distributes said data to other clients;

receiving said distribution tool; and

applying said distribution tool to said data to identify said client as an additional content provider prior to distributing said data to another client, wherein said clients are operated by users of the content file, and, in response to said applying, the list of the plurality of content providers of said data is updated to include the client as the additional content provider for said data.

49. (Currently amended) A computerized method for execution by an original content provider, the method comprising:

maintaining a list of a plurality of content providers of data;

receiving, from a first client, identification information for a first content provider that provided said data to said first client, said first content provider being one of aof the plurality of content providers making said data available to said first client, wherein said data comprises a content file;

receiving, from said first client, payment for said data;

receiving, from said first client, a request for a distribution tool, wherein the distribution tool identifies said first client as an additional content provider that distributes said data to other clients; ~~and~~

transmitting said distribution tool to said first client for subsequent application of the distribution tool to said data by said client to identify said first client as an additional content provider prior to distributing said data to another client by said first client, wherein said clients are operated by users of the content file; and

in response to the client applying the distribution tool, updating the list of the plurality of content providers of said data to include the client as the additional content provider for said data.

50. (Previously presented) The method of claim 49, further comprising:

receiving identification information and payment for said data from a second client, said identification information identifying said first client.